

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the paragraph [0008] beginning on page 3, as follows:

[0008]

The inventors have conducted serious studies in order to achieve the above objects, having resulted in completion of the invention. A discharge device according to the first aspect set forth in claim 1 of the invention is directed to a device for discharge a rod-like product W one end of which is larger sized, including a hopper 10 not only swaying, but also having an opening portion 11, at the bottom surface thereof, extending in a direction of a rotation center axis of a swaying motion; a driving mechanism 20 swaying the hopper 10; and a bottom cover 30 closing the opening portion 11 of the swaying hopper 10 so that rod-like products W do not escape therefrom. The bottom cover 30 has the upper surface closing the opening portion 11 of the hopper 10 profiled so as to be in conformity with a locus on which the opening portion 11 of the swaying hopper 10 moves and a slit 31 extending in a direction perpendicular to a direction of the swaying motion so as to be open on the upper surface. The slit 31 has a width that does not allow the maximum outer size portion of a rod-like product W to pass therethrough, but lets almost all the rod-like product to pass therethrough. In the discharge device, the driving mechanism 20 sways the hopper 10 so that the opening portion 11 of the hopper 10 moves along the upper surface of the bottom cover 30 to thereby guide rod-like products W accommodated in the hopper 10 into the slit 31 of the bottom cover 30 and to discharge the rod-

like products W from the slit 31 being arranged in order therein.

Please amend the paragraphs [0009] through [0014] beginning on page 4, as follows:

[00010009]

A discharge device according to the second aspect set forth in claim 2 of the invention vibrates the bottom cover 30 to discharge the rod-like products W guided into the slit 31.

[00020010]

In a discharge device according to the third aspect set forth in claim 9 of the invention, rubber-like elastic bodies 14 are fixed at the opening portion 11 of the hopper 10 so as to be close to the bottom cover 30.

[00030011]

In a discharge device according to the fourth aspect of the invention set forth in claim 10, a width of the rubber-like elastic bodies 14 fixed at the opening portion 11 of the hopper 10 is defined to have a width in which the end edges thereof get close to the slit 31 when the hopper 10 is inclined. In a discharge device according to the fifth aspect of the invention set forth in claim 11, inclination plates 15, which are replacements for the rubber-like elastic bodies, are connected to the opening portion 11 of the hopper 10. The inclination plates are connected so that the end edges thereof are close to the bottom cover 30. In a discharge device according to the sixth aspect of the invention of claim 12, elastic bodies 16 are connected to the inclination plates 15 so that the end edges of the inclination plates 15 get close to the bottom cover 30 using the elastic bodies 16.

[00040012]

A discharge device according to the seventh aspect set forth in claim

~~13~~-of the invention is equipped with a removal arm 50 catching and pulling off a pipet tip, by the flange thereof, moved in a piled-up state, wherein rod-like products are pipet tips. A discharge device according to the eighth aspect of the invention set forth in claim 14 is not only equipped with the removal arm 50, so as to be inclined relative to a fixing portion 35 not swaying together with the hopper 10, but also has an inclination mechanism 52 for inclining the removal arm 50 constituted of permanent magnets 53 fixed on the hopper 10 and the removal arm 50 at respective opposite portions thereof.

[0005]

In a discharge device according to the ninth aspect set forth in claim 15 of the invention, the bottom cover 30 is provided with an upward inclined slit 32 catching the flange of an pipet tip piled up on a pipet tip moved in the slit 31 and raising the piled up pipet tip. The upward inclined slit 32 is not only inclined at an upward gradient in a moving direction of the pipet tips, but the fore end of the removal arm 50 is also provided to the upward inclined slit 32, thereby enabling the piled-up pipet tip moved along the upward inclined slit 32 to be removed.

[0006]

A taking device according to the tenth aspect of the invention set forth in claim 16 has a clearance 33 through which the flange T of a rod-like product W at the lowest level passes between the fore end of the upward inclined slit 32 and the bottom cover 30 and the clearance 33 is narrower than twice a thickness of the flange T of a rod-like product W.

Please amend the paragraphs [0040] beginning on page 16, as follows:

[00070040]

The removal arm 50 at the lowest position is located inside of the upward inclined slit 32, that is, lower than the upward inclined slit 32. The removal arm 50 moves upward so as to be able to catch a rod-like product W moved in the upward inclined slit 32 and to thereby remove the rod-like product W and thereby, removes a rod-like product W from a rod-like product W at the lowest level. Hence, the fore end of the removal arm 50 does not catch the rod-like product W at the lowest level moved in the slit 31 but is located at a position at which the fore end thereof catches a rod-like product W moved in a piled-up state on a rod-like product W at the lowest level. As this invention may be embodied in several forms without departing from the spirit or essential characteristics thereof, the present embodiment is therefore illustrative and not restrictive, since the scope of the invention is defined by the appended claims rather than by the description preceding them, and all changes that fall within the metes and bounds of the claims or equivalence of such metes and bounds thereof are therefore intended to be embraced by the claims. This application is based on application No. 2003-000002 filed in Japan on January 6, 2003, the content of which is incorporated hereinto by reference.